MARVEL

SEBELA
NOTO

JOHNNY BLAZE GHOST RIDER®

#1

MEPHISTO SMILED AS HE KILLED ME. A SMILE THAT KNEW HOW PAINFUL IT REALLY WAS.
THEN HE BLEW MY CANDLE OUT.
IT WASN'T AN EASY DEATH.
BUT TELL ME ONE THAT IS.
BESIDES, AS MUCH AS DYING HURT, IT WASN'T GONNA BE NOTHING COMPARED TO HELL.

Johnny Blaze was a motorcycle stuntman like his father before him. Like his father, Johnny's career ended in flames when he was possessed by a Spirit of Vengeance--an entity single-mindedly driven to exact penance from the wicked and punish them for their misdeeds. When the Spirit takes hold, Johnny's skin burns away, and he gains the power of the Penance Stare and the ability to wield hellfire--as chains, a motorcycle, and a shotgun. Fighting evil as a reluctant agent of our better angels. That's

JOHNNY BLAZE GHOST RIDER

Newly restored as Sorcerer Supreme, Doctor Strange meant to prove his worth by restoring Las Vegas and reviving the citizens who lost their lives in the Hydra raid. But he paid for his overreach--as the city rose, so did a little piece of Hell in the form of the *Hotel Inferno*. Its proprietor, Mephisto, imprisoned Strange and began collecting souls and expanding Hell's dominion. Stephen's former partner in mystic arts, Wong, hatched a rescue plan that began with recruiting a new team of Midnight Sons and ended with Johnny executing the last stunt of his life--a suicide run up the side of the hotel, and a confrontation with Mephisto that could only end in Johnny's death and

DAMNATION

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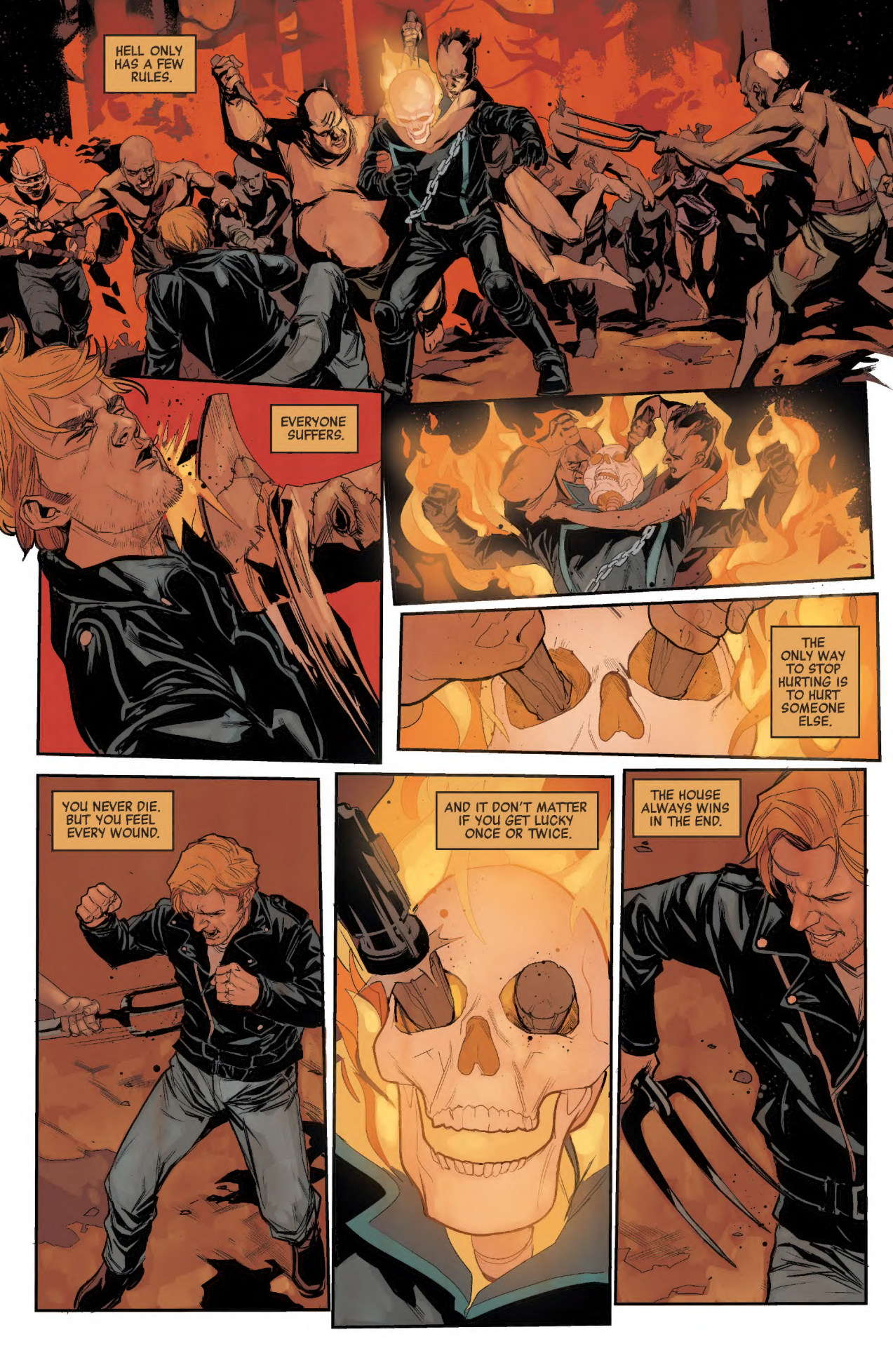
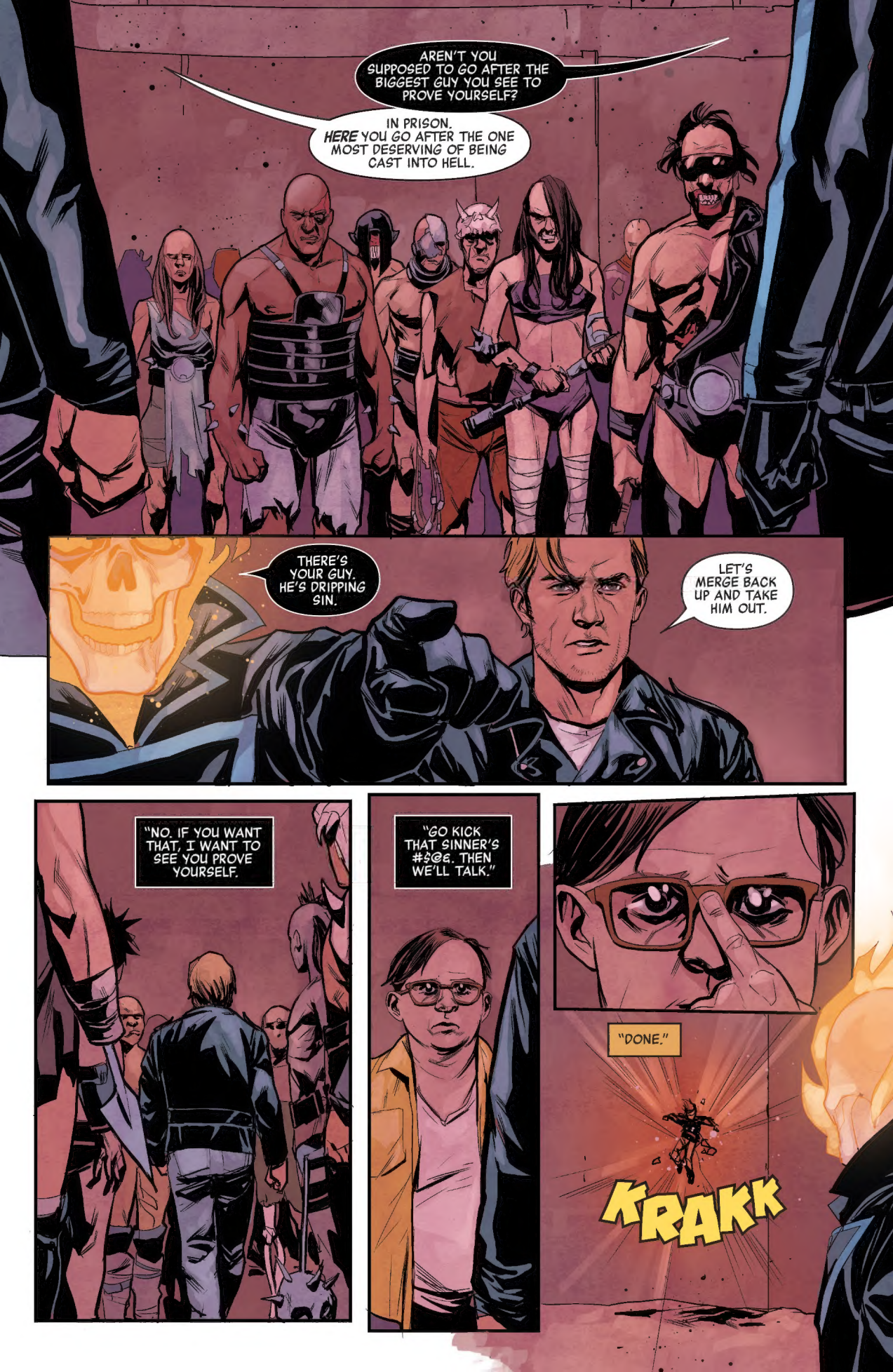
NEW FLESH!
FWAMMM
FWAMMM
HEY.
LOOKS LIKE WE GOT SPLIT UP. AGAIN.
NOW THAT YOU'RE DEAD, YOU DON'T NEED ME ANYMORE.
HEY.
I CAN GET BACK TO WHAT I'M HERE TO DO. PUNISH THE GUILTY, MAKE THEIR SOULS BURN.
THERE'S ENOUGH HERE THAT I WON'T EVER HAVE TO LAY EYES ON YOU AGAIN.
SPIRIT, BUDDY...
...WE'RE ONLY GETTING STARTED.

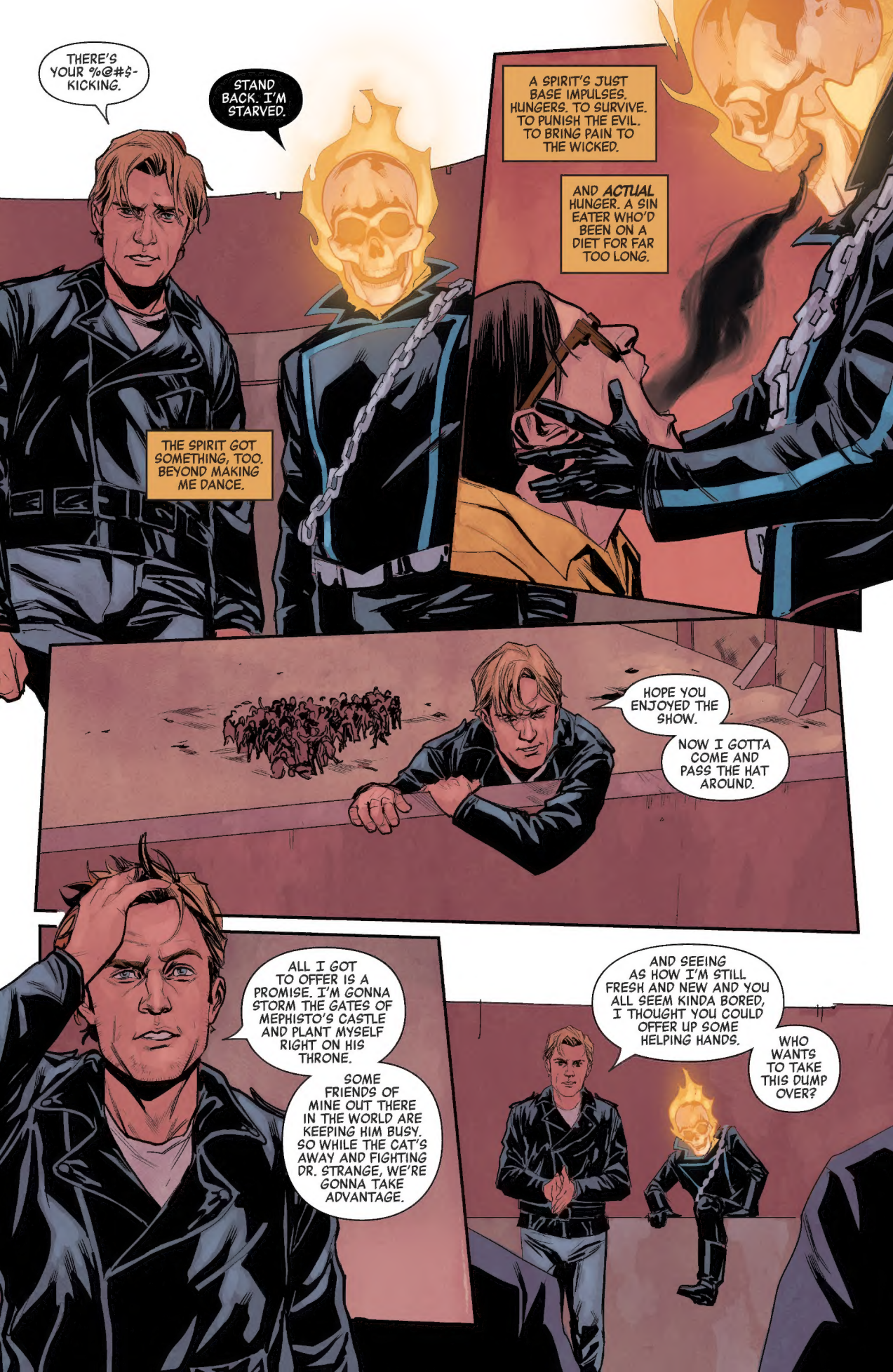

HELL ONLY HAS A FEW RULES.
EVERYONE SUFFERS.
THE ONLY WAY TO STOP HURTING IS TO HURT SOMEONE ELSE.
YOU NEVER DIE. BUT YOU FEEL EVERY WOUND.
AND IT DON'T MATTER IF YOU GET LUCKY ONCE OR TWICE.
THE HOUSE ALWAYS WINS IN THE END.

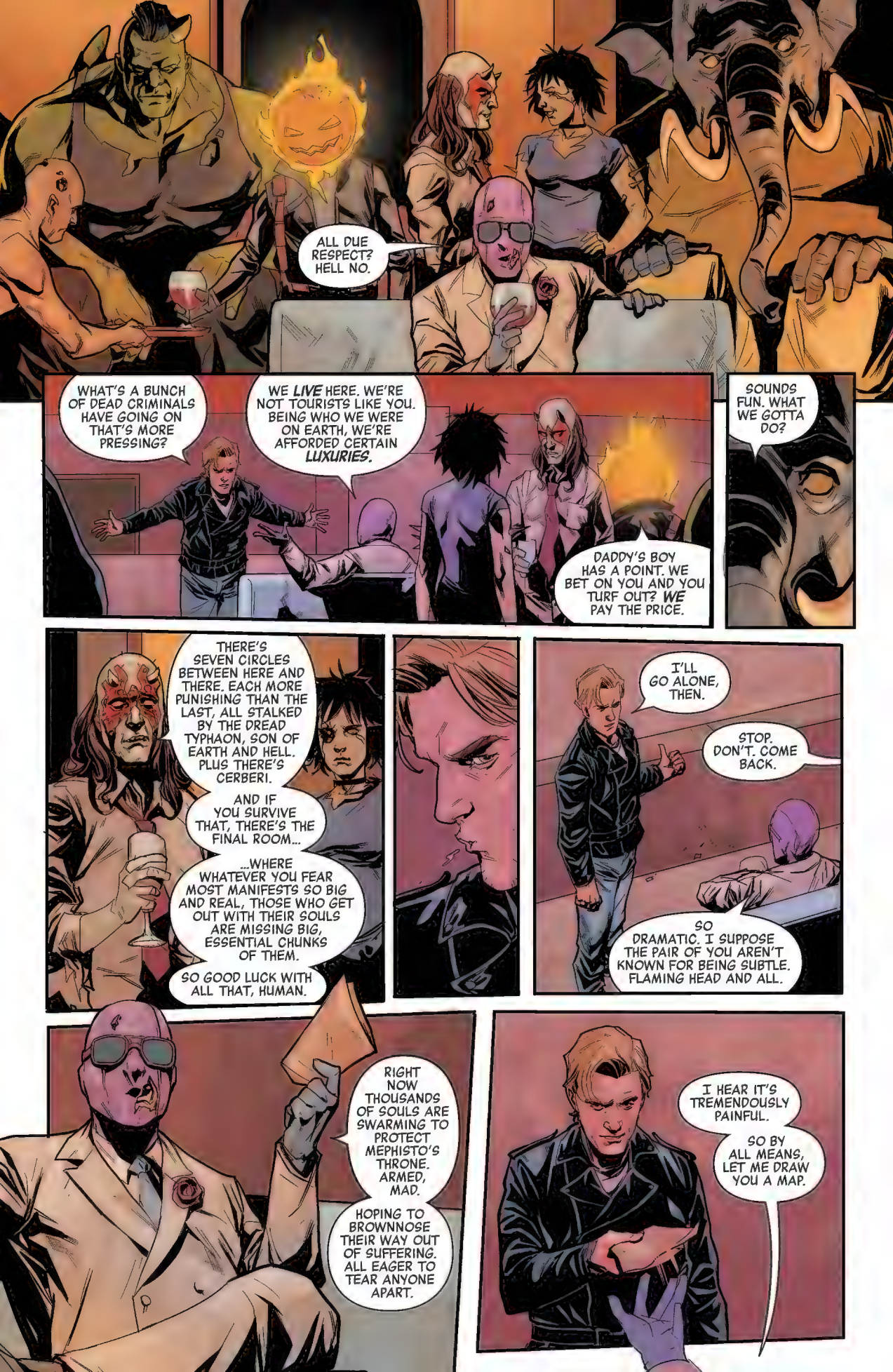
C'MON NOW. GETTIN' HERE WAS ONLY THE FIRST PART OF THE JOB.
I NEED YOU IF WE'RE GONNA GET TO THE END.
I CONTROL MY OWN DESTINY NOW. NO MORE BEING DRAGGED ALONG ON YOUR FOOLISH MISSIONS.
EXCEPT YOU'RE JUST A PHANTOM WITHOUT ME. I GIVE YOU ENOUGH WEIGHT, ENOUGH OF THE REAL WORLD, TO MAKE YOU TRULY DANGEROUS.
WITHOUT ME, YOU'RE A WEAPON WAITING ON A PAIR OF HANDS TO SWING IT.
AND WITHOUT YOU, I GOTTA WALK THE WHOLE WAY THERE.
WE KINDA NEED EACH OTHER.
MUCH AS IT SUCKS.

I'LL SHOW YOU WHAT A PHANTOM CAN DO.
FWSSSSHHH
I KNOW ABOUT YOUR PLAN. I STOMP AROUND IN PEOPLE'S HELLS FOR PLEASURE. I CAN DO SOMETHING MEANINGFUL HERE. I DESERVE IT. NOT YOU.
EXCEPT NEITHER OF US IS GONNA GET THERE WITHOUT THE OTHER. YOUR HELLFIRE WON'T KEEP 'EM DOWN LONG.
WHAT DO I GET FOR MY COOPERATION?
BEST REWARD OF ALL--YOU GET TO SPIT IN MEPHISTO'S FACE AND WALK AWAY TO TELL THE TALE.
IF WE SURVIVE THE NEXT FEW MINUTES.
WE WILL. THEY WON'T ATTACK, JUST KEEP US FROM WANDERING AWAY FROM THE MAIN ATTRACTION.
HERE'S WHERE I'M GONNA NEED YOUR HELP.


AREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO GO AFTER THE BIGGEST GUY YOU SEE TO PROVE YOURSELF?
IN PRISON. HERE YOU GO AFTER THE ONE MOST DESERVING OF BEING CAST INTO HELL.
THERE'S YOUR GUY. HE'S DRIPPING SIN.
LET'S MERGE BACK UP AND TAKE HIM OUT.
"NO. IF YOU WANT THAT, I WANT TO SEE YOU PROVE YOURSELF.
"GO KICK THAT SINNER'S #$@&. THEN WE'LL TALK."
"DONE."
KRAKK

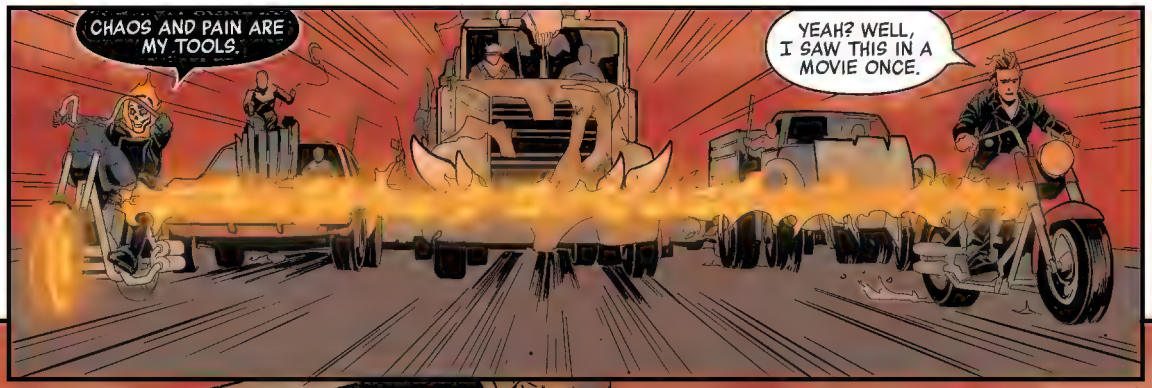
I WASN'T HERE TO PLAY ALONG WITH THE RULES.
DONE MY SHARE OF SUFFERING AND THEN SOME.
I COULD DEAL WITH WHAT HELL HAD TO DOLE OUT.
THIS WASN'T FOR ME.
IT WAS FOR THEM.
DOWN HERE, SUFFERING AND SIN WERE CURRENCY.
ALL THEY BOUGHT YOU WAS A BETTER VIEW OF THE PAIN.
KRAK
BUT SINCE THE SPIRIT TOLD ME WHAT THIS FELLA DID, I CAN'T SAY I DIDN'T ENJOY MYSELF A LITTLE.

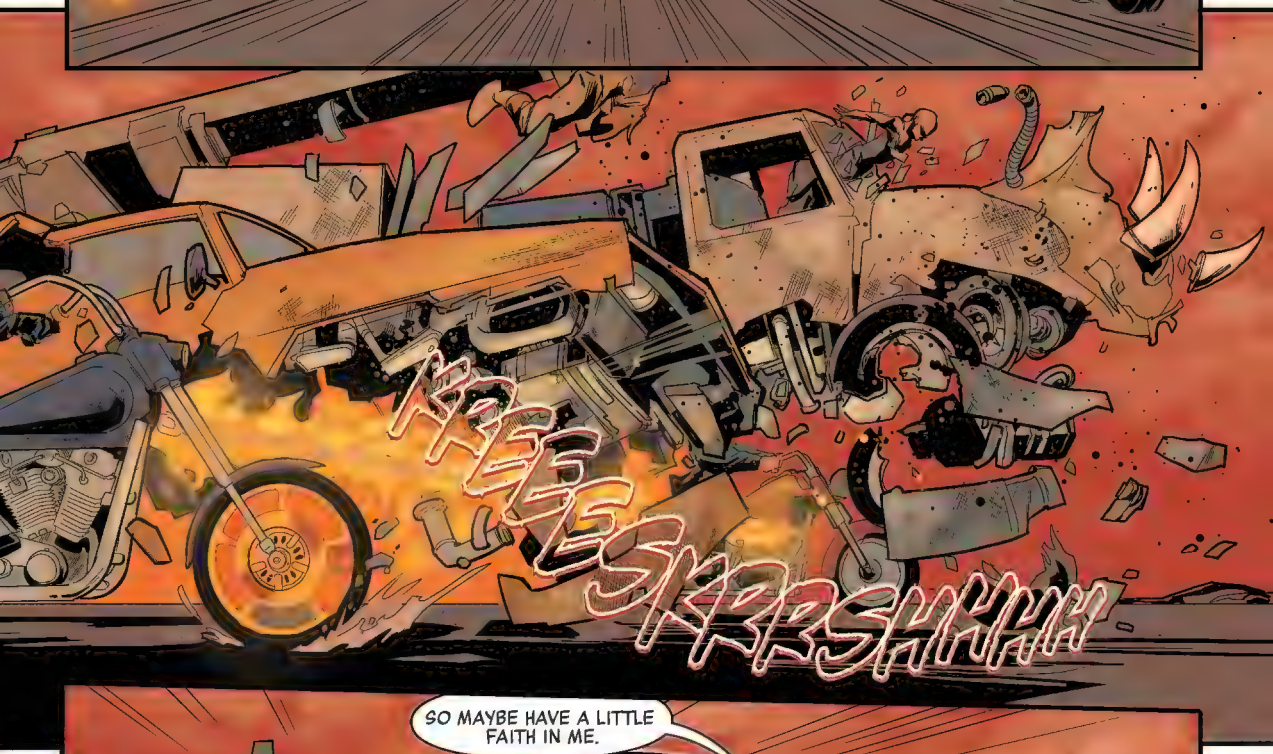

THERE'S YOUR %@#$-KICKING.
STAND BACK. I'M STARVED.
THE SPIRIT GOT SOMETHING, TOO. BEYOND MAKING ME DANCE.
A SPIRIT'S JUST BASE IMPULSES. HUNGERS. TO SURVIVE. TO PUNISH THE EVIL. TO BRING PAIN TO THE WICKED.
AND ACTUAL HUNGER. A SIN EATER WHO'D BEEN ON A DIET FOR FAR TOO LONG.
HOPE YOU ENJOYED THE SHOW.
NOW I GOTTA COME AND PASS THE HAT AROUND.
ALL I GOT TO OFFER IS A PROMISE. I'M GONNA STORM THE GATES OF MEPHISTO'S CASTLE AND PLANT MYSELF RIGHT ON HIS THRONE.
SOME FRIENDS OF MINE OUT THERE IN THE WORLD ARE KEEPING HIM BUSY. SO WHILE THE CAT'S AWAY AND FIGHTING DR. STRANGE, WE'RE GONNA TAKE ADVANTAGE.
AND SEEING AS HOW I'M STILL FRESH AND NEW AND YOU ALL SEEM KINDA BORED, I THOUGHT YOU COULD OFFER UP SOME HELPING HANDS.
WHO WANTS TO TAKE THIS DUMP OVER?


ALL DUE RESPECT? HELL NO.
WHAT'S A BUNCH OF DEAD CRIMINALS HAVE GOING ON THAT'S MORE PRESSING?
WE LIVE HERE. WE'RE NOT TOURISTS LIKE YOU. BEING WHO WE WERE ON EARTH, WE'RE AFFORDED CERTAIN LUXURIES.
DADDY'S BOY HAS A POINT. WE BET ON YOU AND YOU TURF OUT? WE PAY THE PRICE.
SOUNDS FUN. WHAT WE GOTTA DO?
THERE'S SEVEN CIRCLES BETWEEN HERE AND THERE. EACH MORE PUNISHING THAN THE LAST, ALL STALKED BY THE DREAD TYPHAON, SON OF EARTH AND HELL. PLUS THERE'S CERBERI.
AND IF YOU SURVIVE THAT, THERE'S THE FINAL ROOM...
...WHERE WHATEVER YOU FEAR MOST MANIFESTS SO BIG AND REAL, THOSE WHO GET OUT WITH THEIR SOULS ARE MISSING BIG, ESSENTIAL CHUNKS OF THEM.
SO GOOD LUCK WITH ALL THAT, HUMAN.
I'LL GO ALONE, THEN.
STOP. DON'T. COME BACK.
SO DRAMATIC. I SUPPOSE THE PAIR OF YOU AREN'T KNOWN FOR BEING SUBTLE. FLAMING HEAD AND ALL.
RIGHT NOW THOUSANDS OF SOULS ARE SWARMING TO PROTECT MEPHISTO'S THRONE. ARMED, MAD.
HOPING TO BROWNNOSE THEIR WAY OUT OF SUFFERING. ALL EAGER TO TEAR ANYONE APART.
I HEAR IT'S TREMENDOUSLY PAINFUL.
SO BY ALL MEANS, LET ME DRAW YOU A MAP.

YOU IN OR YOU OUT?
I DON'T CARE ABOUT TAKING THIS NIGHTMARE OVER. I DON'T CARE ABOUT LAS VEGAS. THAT'S NOT WHY I'M HERE.
HOW ABOUT HURTING A LOT OF BAD PEOPLE? YOU CARE ABOUT THAT?
I CAN GO HURT THEM ALL MYSELF. WHY DO I NEED YOU?
HOW MANY SINNERS YOU FIGURE THERE ARE DOWN HERE?
BILLIONS SERVED.
WELL, I CAN SAVE YOU SOME GAS...
"...AND BRING THE WORST OF THE WORST RIGHT TO YOUR FRONT DOOR."

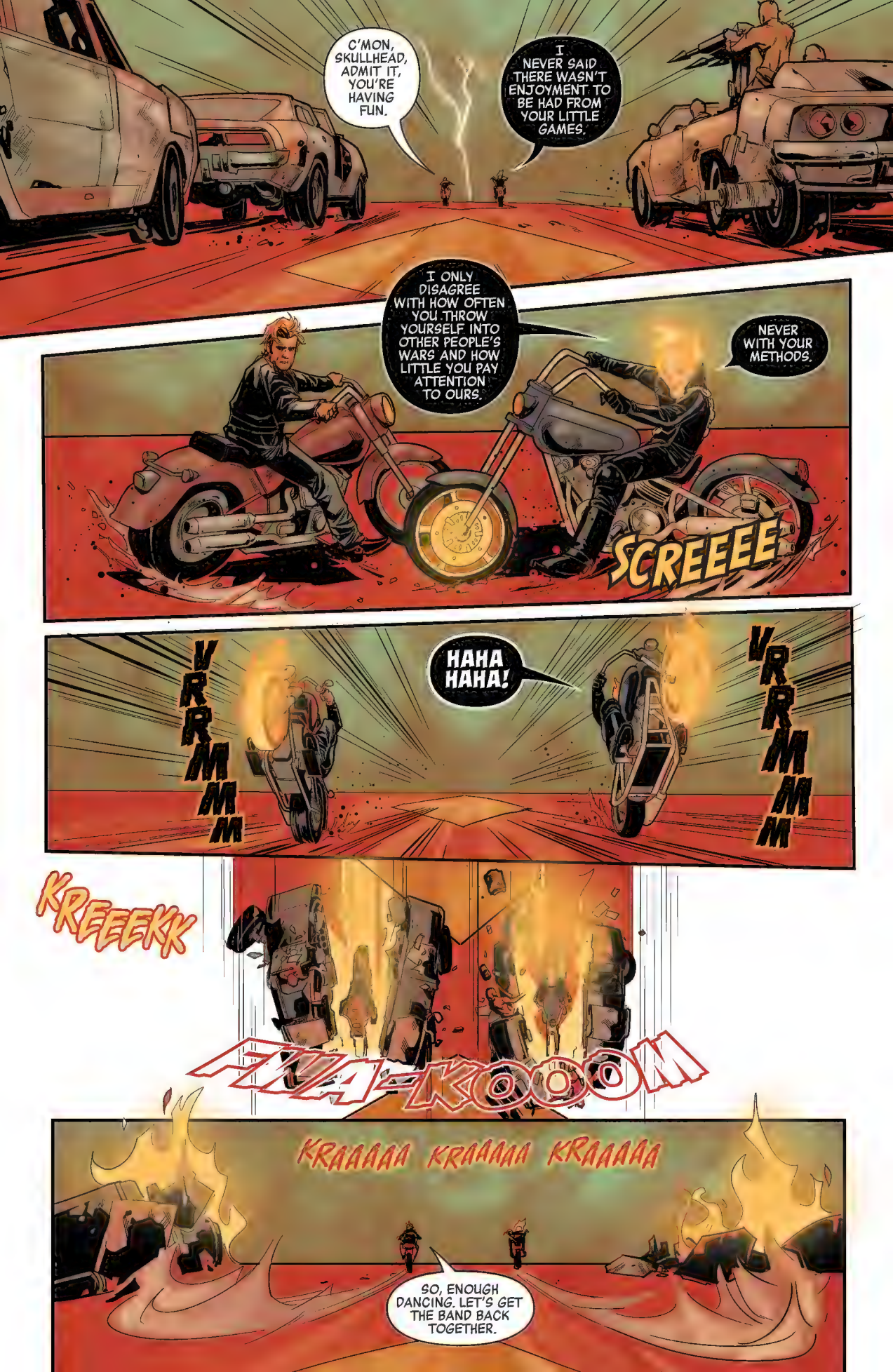
OKAY, LIKE WE TALKED ABOUT.
I DON'T NEED LESSONS FROM YOU, BLAZE.


CHAOS AND PAIN ARE MY TOOLS.
YEAH? WELL, I SAW THIS IN A MOVIE ONCE.

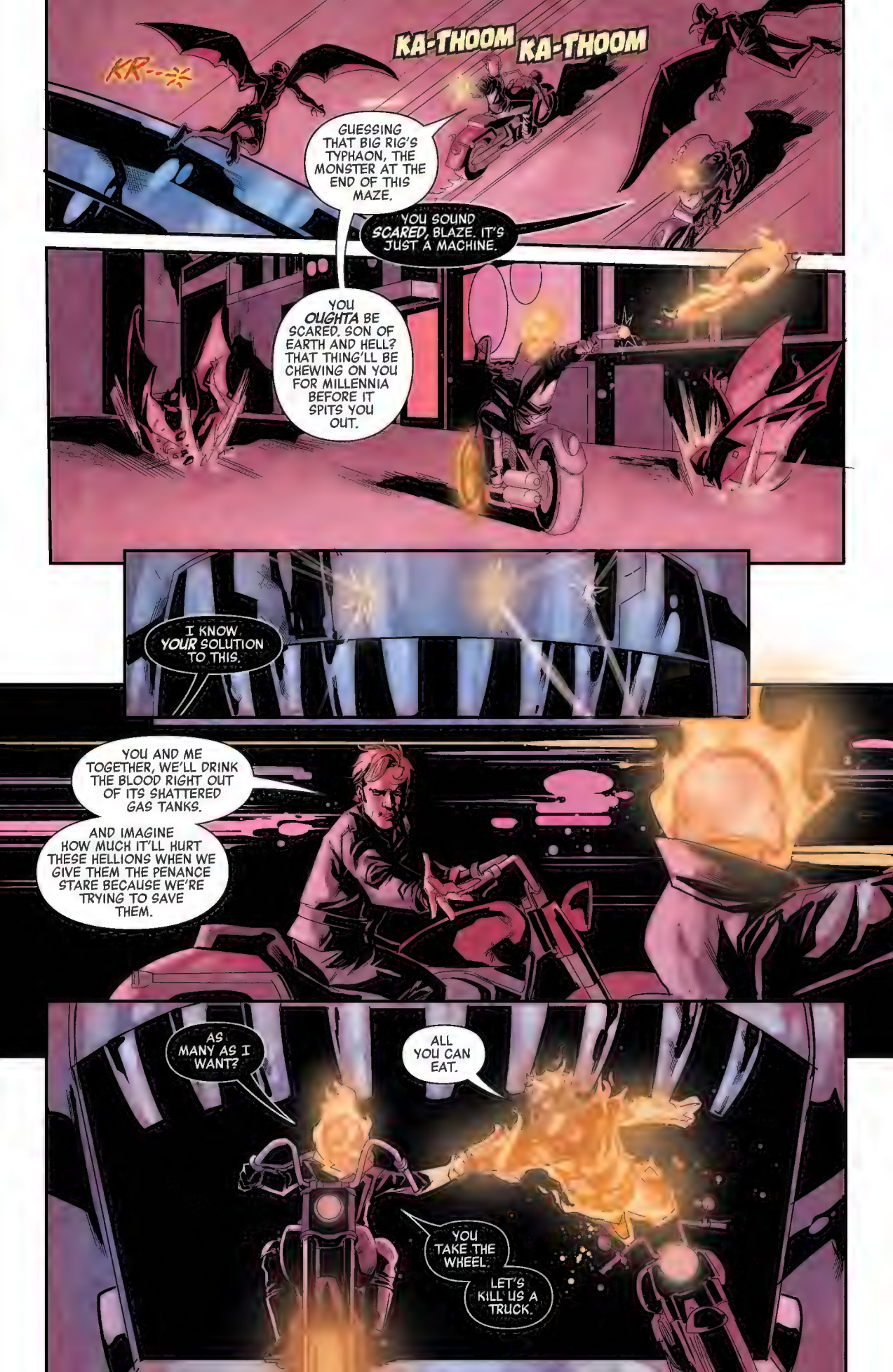

KREESKRRSHHHK

SO MAYBE HAVE A LITTLE FAITH IN ME.
THAT WAS...NOT UNENJOYABLE.

FLOOOP
WE STILL GOT FIVE CIRCLES TO GO. WITH NOTHING BETWEEN ME AND DOOM BUT A SET OF RIDING LEATHERS.
STOP BOTHERING ME ABOUT IT. I'M ENJOYING STRETCHING MY LEGS A BIT.
AND I LIKE WATCHING YOU HAVE TO WORK A LITTLE HARDER.
WE RODE FOR HOURS, ENDLESS MILES OF DEAD ROAD, SCREAMING HELLIONS ON OUR TAILS.
WHICH WAS BETTER THAN THE SILENCES TRAPPED NEXT TO IT. TRYING NOT TO STARE DOWN THIS PART OF ME.
THE PART I KEPT BLAMING MY BLOODLUST ON. THE PART I'D WANTED TO BE FREE OF SO MANY TIMES.
NOW THAT WE WERE APART, ALL I COULD THINK OF WAS LOCKING MYSELF BACK DOWN. BECAUSE WITHOUT IT, I'M JUST ANOTHER DEAD MAN IN HELL.
FWKRSHHH
WITHOUT ME, IT WAS JUST ANOTHER SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE, TOO OCCUPIED WITH PLYING ITS TRADE TO REALIZE JUST HOW MUCH POWER IT HAD.


C'MON, SKULLHEAD, ADMIT IT, YOU'RE HAVING FUN.
I NEVER SAID THERE WASN'T ENJOYMENT TO BE HAD FROM YOUR LITTLE GAMES.
I ONLY DISAGREE WITH HOW OFTEN YOU THROW YOURSELF INTO OTHER PEOPLE'S WARS AND HOW LITTLE YOU PAY ATTENTION TO OURS.
NEVER WITH YOUR METHODS.
SCREEEE
VRRMMM
HAHA HAHA!
VRRMMM
KREEEKK
KA-KOOOM
KRAAAAA KRAAAAA KRAAAAA
SO, ENOUGH DANCING. LET'S GET THE BAND BACK TOGETHER.

BLAZE, I BRING EVERYTHING TO THE TABLE--THE BIKE, THE POWERS, THE INVULNERABILITY. WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU HAVE TO OFFER?
KRAAA
THAT HURTS, BUDDY. YOU KNOW WHAT I DO?
KRAA
I MAKE ALL THIS CRAZY NONSENSE MEAN SOMETHING.
SO WHAT'S THE POINT OF THIS MISADVENTURE? WHAT DO YOU GET OUT OF ALL THIS?
IF I KEEP JUST ONE UNLUCKY BASTARD OUT OF THIS PLACE, THAT'S ENOUGH.
FWAMMMM
ENOUGH TO STAY DOWN HERE FOREVER?
I GUESS SO. BUT THAT AIN'T UP TO ME. IT'S UP TO YOU.
I GET IT. YOU PUNISH SOULS FOR THEIR SINS. I TRY TO SAVE 'EM FROM WINDING UP HERE.
BUT YOU WANNA PUNISH THE DESERVING? I CAN'T THINK OF ANYONE MORE DESERVING THAN MEPHISTO. AND THIS'LL MAKE HIM HURT.


KR--
KA-THOOM
KA-THOOM
GUESSING THAT BIG RIG'S TYPHAON, THE MONSTER AT THE END OF THIS MAZE.
YOU SOUND SCARED, BLAZE. IT'S JUST A MACHINE.
YOU OUGHTA BE SCARED. SON OF EARTH AND HELL? THAT THING'LL BE CHEWING ON YOU FOR MILLENNIA BEFORE IT SPITS YOU OUT.
I KNOW YOUR SOLUTION TO THIS.
YOU AND ME TOGETHER, WE'LL DRINK THE BLOOD RIGHT OUT OF ITS SHATTERED GAS TANKS.
AND IMAGINE HOW MUCH IT'LL HURT THESE HELLIONS WHEN WE GIVE THEM THE PENANCE STARE BECAUSE WE'RE TRYING TO SAVE THEM.
AS MANY AS I WANT?
ALL YOU CAN EAT.
YOU TAKE THE WHEEL.
LET'S KILL US A TRUCK.

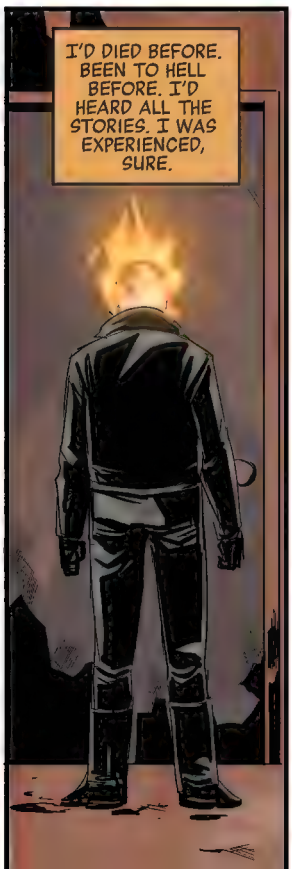
SLIPPING BACK INTO THE SADDLE WAS LIKE GOING HOME AGAIN.
THE WALLS MIGHT BE BLEEDING AND IT MIGHT BE ON FIRE, BUT IT'S ALL MINE.
THE TWO OF US WERE TRAPPED IN HELL, BUT TOGETHER WE WERE FASTER, STRONGER, TERRIFYING.
DREAMS HERE DON'T COME TRUE.
NIGHTMARES DO.
SO I STUCK A HAND OUT TO MINE. EMBRACED MY NIGHTMARE.
AND ALL THE FUN THINGS THAT CAME WITH IT.
HEY. YOU CAME.
YEAH. THEY'RE ALL SCARED OF LOSIN' THEIR STATUS IF MEPHISTO COMES BACK EARLY.
ME, I'M A GIANT ELEPHANT MAN LIVING IN THE PITS OF HELL. I DON'T REALLY GOT MUCH TO LOSE.

ME EITHER.
BRACE YOURSELF. THIS MIGHT HURT A BIT.
I AIN'T THE ONE WHO'S GONNA HURT.
SKKRNNCHHH
DON'T SPARE NONE OF THESE SOULS ON MY ACCOUNT.
FWAMM
HAHA HAHAHA HA!

GO TAKE OVER HELL OR WHATEVER YOU'RE DOING.
I'M GONNA STOMP ON A MYTH OR TWO.

KNOCK KNOCK. I'M HERE TO TAKE THIS DUMP OVER.

HELL NEVER SCARED ME. BUT THAT'S NOT WHY I GOT ASKED TO GO ON THIS SUICIDE MISSION.

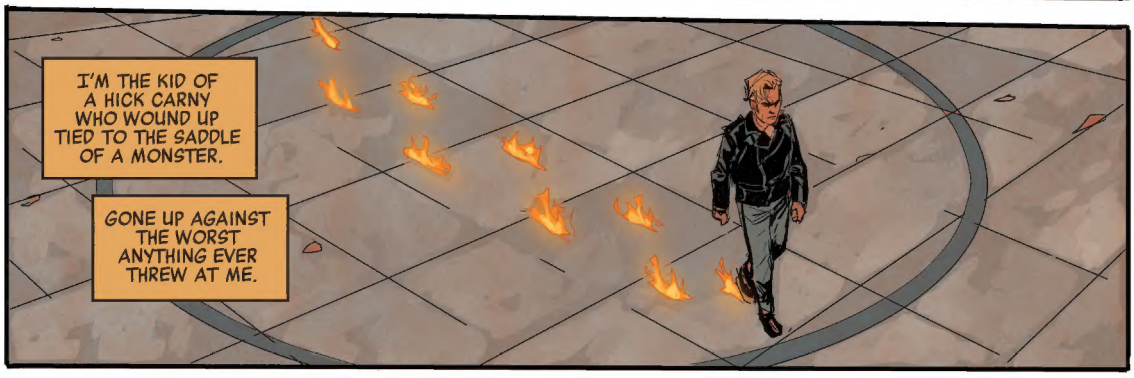

I'D DIED BEFORE. BEEN TO HELL BEFORE. I'D HEARD ALL THE STORIES. I WAS EXPERIENCED, SURE.

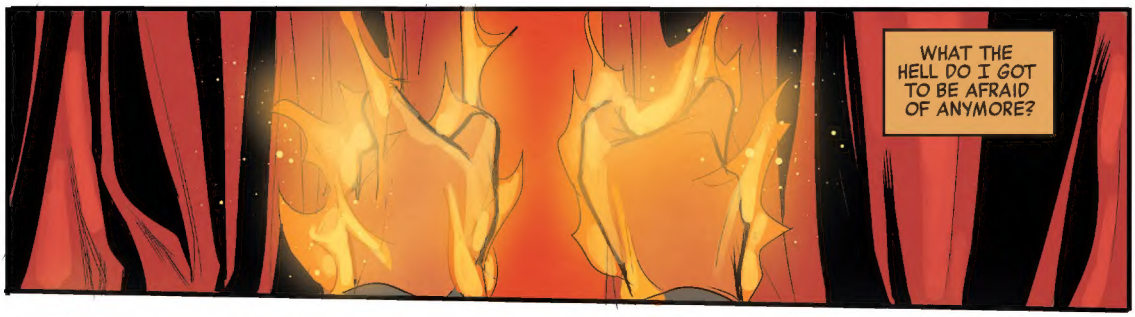
BUT I WAS THE ONLY GUY FOR THE JOB 'CAUSE OF THIS DOOR.

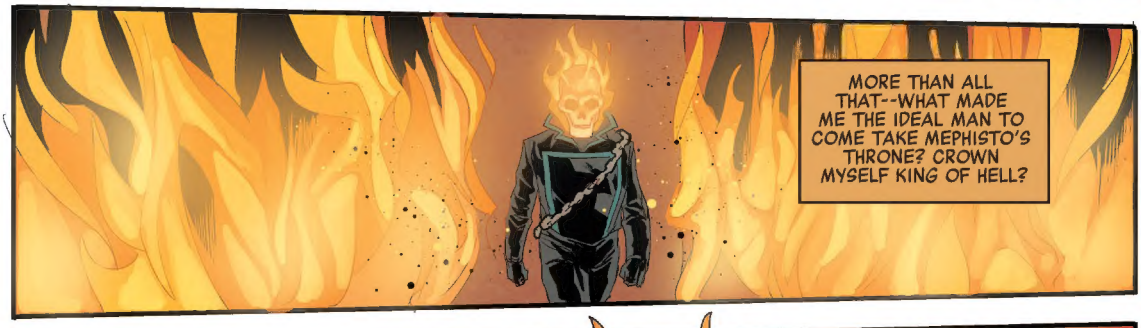
GIMME A SECOND, BUDDY.

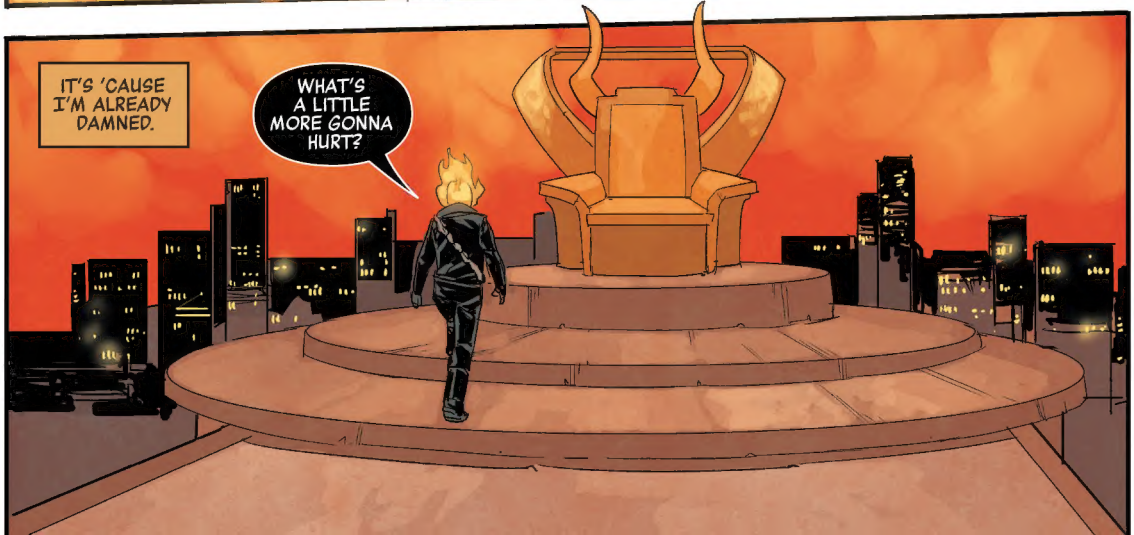
GOTTA DO THIS ONE ON MY OWN.
ON THE OTHER SIDE IS WHATEVER YOU FEAR MOST. EVEN IF YOU'RE A SPIRIT OF VENGEANCE.

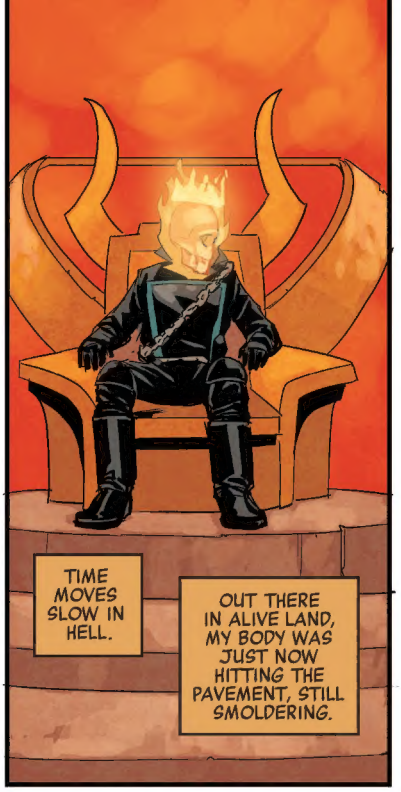
BUT THERE'S NOTHING--THIS WORLD OR THE NEXT--I'M AFRAID OF ANYMORE.

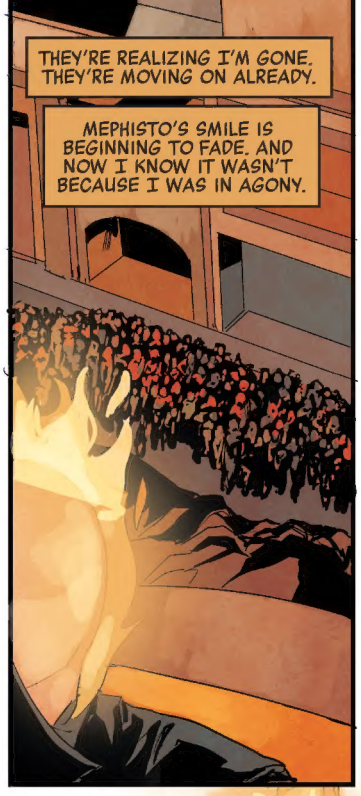

I'M THE KID OF A HICK CARNY WHO WOUND UP TIED TO THE SADDLE OF A MONSTER.
GONE UP AGAINST THE WORST ANYTHING EVER THREW AT ME.

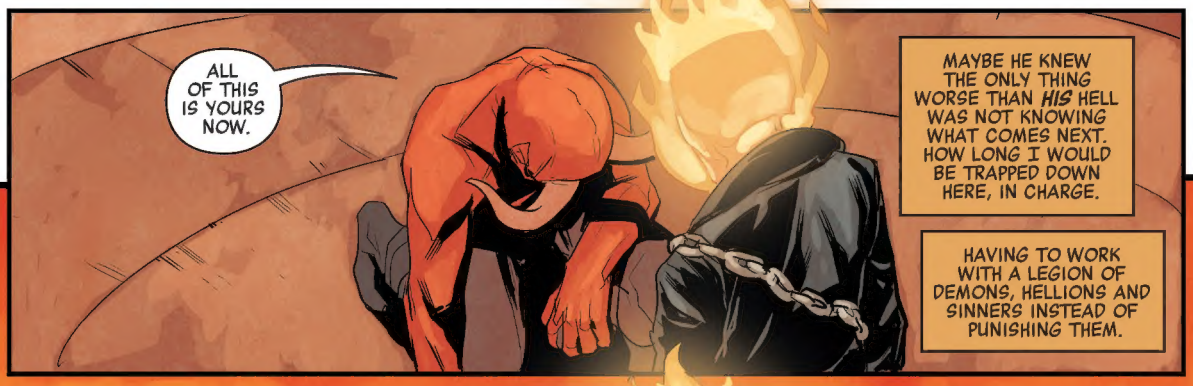

WHAT THE HELL DO I GOT TO BE AFRAID OF ANYMORE?


MORE THAN ALL THAT--WHAT MADE ME THE IDEAL MAN TO COME TAKE MEPHISTO'S THRONE? CROWN MYSELF KING OF HELL?


IT'S 'CAUSE I'M ALREADY DAMNED.
WHAT'S A LITTLE MORE GONNA HURT?







TELL US WHAT TO DO WITH IT.

...

THERE ARE SOME THINGS WORSE THAN DEATH.

AND NOW I RULE OVER THEM ALL.

CONTINUED IN DAMNATION!

The tale of **DAMNATION** continues in

BEN REILLY: SCARLET SPIDER #16 ON SALE NOW

IRON FIST #79

DOCTOR STRANGE #388

And it concludes in

DOCTOR STRANGE: DAMNATION #4

If you'd sell your soul to hear further tales of the new king of Hell, induce a weak-willed individual nearby to purchase their own copy of this manuscript, then write to mheroes@marvel.com in the dead of night to let us know.

AN OROBOROS
RELEASE - DCP